

CHILDNET'S PCIT SUCCESS

Five-year-old Krystal* was initially referred to ChildNet Behavioral Health Services by her Head Start teacher, Ms. Swanson*, who reported Krystal whined constantly, yelled at classmates, talked back angrily to her teacher and had difficulty following directions. Krystal's anger was so out of control, she was suspended from school for threatening to kill her classmate. Krystal's mother, Regina* described Krystal's behavior at home as "aggressive, whiny, clingy, and constantly on her nerves". Further, Krystal experienced anxiety and tearfulness when separated from her mother. Before entering treatment, Krystal's world turned upside down when her biological father unexpectedly left the family and moved out of state.

Feeling overwhelmed with Krystal's behavior, Regina agreed to participate in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT). (Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an evidenced based parent-child treatment approach that assists parents of children with behavior problems (aggression, non-compliance, defiance temper tantrums) or who have witnessed or experienced trauma. PCIT focuses on promoting positive parent-child relationships and interactions while teaching parents effective child management skills.)

With the help of a skilled PCIT clinician, Regina learned skills to manage Krystal's behaviors by praising Krystal's positive behaviors and ignoring the negative ones. During treatment, Regina's consistent use of specific praises resulted in Krystal decreasing her yelling and physical aggression as well as increasing her positive communication with adults and peers. Further, Regina learned that actively ignoring Krystal's whining and clinging behavior significantly decreased those behaviors. When asked how PCIT impacted the family, Regina stated, "PCIT changed the way I view and interact with my child. It helped bring us closer together and increased my confidence as a mother. My child did not come with a parenting manual – PCIT has become my manual for parenting."

*Names have been changed to protect client and family's identity



CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE

SUCCESS STORY

“Jose” was an overweight 4 yr. 8 month old Latino boy referred to Children’s Institute Inc. by his school due to his disruptive behavior at home and school. Jose’s parents separated when he was three months old. In the past Jose’s father visited sporadically, but currently he has no contact with him. According to mother, his father complains that Jose is very disruptive, and he doesn’t want to spend time with him. Jose’s mother had a stressful pregnancy due to arguing with his father and she returned to work two months after Jose was born, working 6 days a week in a bakery. Jose’s mother reported that she had never played with him. Mother was always tired when she got home from work and avoided interacting with him due to his disruptive behaviors, which made him sad. Mother disclosed that she would shake him by the shoulders when both were frustrated and she would tie him to the time-out chair with a towel for his aggressive and noncompliant behavior. Mother reports that she does not remember playing with her own mother or ever being praised for good behavior.

PCIT treatment goals were to decrease Jose’s hitting, crying, yelling, throwing toys, throwing himself on the floor and kicking from 10 times a day to 4 times a day.

Cultural Barriers/Considerations: Jose’s mother is monolingual Spanish speaking, while he is bilingual, preferring to speak to mother in English. However, Jose appears to understand Spanish (as he does respond to mother in English when she speaks to him in Spanish). Jose is more acculturated than his mother, which impacts their relationship. Mother has few memories of spending time with her own mother, which makes learning new skills challenging. Mother’s language and cultural background are important in explaining PCIT concepts in ways that she can understand and will find useful. PCIT will be provided in Spanish.

Twenty-five sessions later, Jose and his mother have successfully completed PCIT and mother is very grateful for the parenting skills that she has learned. She reports that their relationship is much more positive. Jose will now play with his mother, smile often, has learned to use words to get his needs met, is able to concentrate with support, is able to follow instructions with support, is able to keep his hands to himself, is able to concentrate in order to complete homework assignments, is able to share, and demonstrates patience. Jose has exceeded his original goals by decreasing the number of tantrums from 10 times a day to 1-2 times a week, and decreasing his aggressive behavior from daily to 3 times a month. He is now affectionate and hugs his mother. Mother reports that she has learned ways to help him calm down and learned to identify his anxious cues. Mother is now able to take Jose to family gatherings and have a good time, instead of avoiding them because of his acting-out behaviors.